The Office of Student Affairs at Marquette University has advised two students that alternative ways of promoting awareness about the serious issue of violence against women should be considered, rather than a public presentation of “Vagina Monologues.”

Rev. Andy Thon, S.J., vice president for student affairs, met with the students February 14 and emphasized that the university “unequivocally supports efforts by student groups and university offices to address any instances of violence against women.” He raised several concerns:

- The short time frame before a March production date raises questions about the quality of the production and precludes the educational dialogue that needs to precede such an activity.
- There may be better ways to address the “issues of violence, oppression and injustice that affect Marquette students” cited in the application without the distractive nature of “Vagina Monologues.” The focus should be on the substantive issue, rather than debate over a particular play.
- Two academic departments were not interested in sponsoring a production.

The university already works on multiple levels and through multiple offices to address the issue of violence against women. The campus network HAVEN (Helping Abuse and Violence End Now) is one such example. The Departments of Public Safety, Student Development and University Ministry, the Counseling Center and Student Health Service, and the Centers of Psychological Services and Health Education and Promotion also have a role to play in this important work.

The Office of Student Affairs offered to assist the students with additional dialogue and programming to increase awareness of the issue.